

RED JACKET FIRE STATION  
(Calumet Fire Station)  
300 Block of Sixth Street  
Calumet  
Houghton County  
Michigan

HABS MI-414  
*MI-414*

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### RED JACKET FIRE STATION (Calumet Fire Station)

HABS No. MI-414

Name: Red Jacket Fire Station

Location: Lot 4 of block 21 of the plat for the Village of Red Jacket (now Calumet), Michigan. This is on the west side of the 300 block of Sixth Street and about 174 feet south of the intersection of Sixth and Elm Streets.

Present Owner: The Village of Calumet, Michigan.

Present Occupants: Various.

Present Uses: Mixed. The building has been used the past few summers for set construction and cast housing for the summer repertory companies that have played in the Calumet Theatre across the street. It has also been used for storing a variety of the objects belonging to the village.

Significance: Designed by Charles K. Shand and built in 1898, this Fire Station is his most successful design in the community. Using local red sandstone, and the no longer fashionable Richardsonian Romanesque, he produced a solid and dignified building (fig. 1). The plan, also, is well realized, incorporating the needs of horses, engines and men. The building served the community until 1964 when the fire department was moved into quarters in the village hall.

Historian: Kevin Harrington, August 1975.

#### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1. Dates of erection: 1898-1899. (Expense sheets in Village clerk's office).
2. Architect: Charles K. Shand, Calumet, Michigan. (Signed drawings for the project, as well as specifications; see below).
3. Original and subsequent owners: The building has always been owned by the Village of Red Jacket (now Calumet), Michigan. The site was owned until 1910 by the Calumet and Hecla Mining Company, when it was sold to the village. The chain of title for the Red Jacket Fire Hall located on Sixth Street in Calumet, historically sited on lot 4 of block 21 of the plat for Red Jacket, follows. Note, as did all the other lots on block 21, the lot measured 58' x 118'.

1910, September 9<sup>th</sup>: L 88, p. 141 of Deeds  
Calumet & Hecla Mining Company  
- to -  
The Village of Red Jacket  
for \$3500.00

WARRANTY DEED

Lot 4, Block 21.

Since the fire hall was built in 1898, before the property transfer, the Village probably was leasing the lot from the Company during that interval or years between 1898 and 1910. It, moreover, was the Company's practice to lease lots to municipal, school and religious organizations, at the cost of \$1.00 per year.

4. Builders, contractors, and suppliers: Bajari & Ulseth, a firm comprised of two Norwegian immigrants, Adolph Bajari and Edward Ulseth, were awarded the contract for all carpenter work on the Fire Station. The bid price was \$7378.00, and the work was to be completed by the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 1898. (Copy of contract in Village office). The contract was signed on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August 1898.

A listing of costs for the Fire Station is also in the Village office, and it is tabulated as follows:

Fire Station Expenses

Contractor	Contract	Cost
Bajari & Ulseth	Carpentry (probably includes interior and roof structure)	\$8020.07
C.K. Shand	Architect & Superintendent	\$914.95
John Procissi	Stone Mason	\$7945.21
JFD Smith	unknown	\$831.40
Frank Zoberlin	unknown	\$1329.35
Sundries		\$1050.04
J. Sotlich	unknown	\$9.25
		\$20,100.27

5. Original plans and construction: This, the third fire station in the Village, was effectively planned to serve its function. The large engine room, with its three doors onto the street, provided ample space for the engines. In addition there was also sufficient room to service the engines and other equipment. The horse stalls to the rear of the first floor were also useful. The horses each had individual stalls, with two doors in each. One door led to the back of the stalls and out into the alley. The other door opened to the engine room. These doors were controlled by a single opening mechanism, so that when an alarm was sounded the horses were all let out of their stalls at the same time. The horses themselves were trained to go to their proper places to be harnessed to the engines. In the floor of the stalls was a drainage system to carry away the urine; there also was a trap door through which manure was shoveled down onto a wagon, which could then be pulled up the rear ramp to the basement, and hauled away.

Hay was stored in the rear third of the second floor, along with grain. These could then be gotten to the stalls by a chute for the hay (still in place) or the grain.

The bunks for the firemen were located in the smaller of the long narrow rooms, along the north wall. At the east end of this space was the brass pole, which the firemen slid down when the alarm was sounded. At the west end of this space are the paneled lockers where the firemen kept their clothes and other goods. In the larger of the long rooms, the firemen held dances and other social affairs. These were usually restricted to the members of the company and a few special friends. The small room located in the southeast corner of the building was known on the plan as the Reading Room. The elegant fireplace remains, but there is no evidence that bookcases were ever part of the decor. In the small tower over this southeast corner of the building the fire bell was to be placed. Neither the bell nor any striking mechanism survives.

6. Alterations and additions:

1905, February 6<sup>th</sup>: Bid of John Tachell & Co. to paint and stain the walls and woodwork of the second floor of the fire station, including stenciling above the picture rail, all for \$130.00. This bid seems to have been accepted. (Note: No stenciling survives).

1909, February 11<sup>th</sup>: Bid of John E. Tachell & Co. to paint the second floor of the fire station for \$55.00; and to clean and varnish the woodwork, and oil and varnish the floors for \$38.00; total bid of \$93.00, accepted and contract awarded on the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 1904.

1909, April 12<sup>th</sup>: Bid of John Tachell & Co. to clean, varnish and paint the woodwork and paint the plaster on the first floor of the fire station for \$60.00; and to Calsomine the barn and paint its woodwork for \$20.00; total bid of \$80.00 accepted and contract awarded on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 1909.

1927, September 6<sup>th</sup>: Bill from W.F. Milford, Contractor and builder, for materials for fire station barn totaling \$13.35.

1928, January 10<sup>th</sup>: Bill of J.M. Shanahan, Cor 7 and Portland, Red Jacket, for painting in the fire station totaling \$79.00.

1939, December 15<sup>th</sup>: Date of a drawing entitled "General arrangement of new reinforced concrete floor." The engineer who approved this drawing, S. A. Nagel, worked for the Calumet & Hecla Consolidated Copper Company, Inc. It was common for the company to provide the services of its professional staff to public institutions. Nagel, according to William Kaiser, retired Houghton County Road Engineer, who knew him, was immensely talented and unfortunately an alcoholic. Kaiser recalls him as the finest engineer he ever knew.

1958, July 3<sup>rd</sup>: Drawing of "Basement Plan." There has been reinforcement of some of the basement piers, and the addition of some concrete piers. This plan is probably associated with that work.

1959, March 31<sup>st</sup>: Drawing of "Fire Station, Front Elevation," by G H M. This drawing probably records the installation of the current overhead doors.

1964, March: Removal of the fire department to the Village Hall. After this date the building has been variously used. Simple frame and sheetrock partitions have been erected on the second floor to create rooms for the summer repertory cast and crew members who perform in the village theatre across the street.

B. Historical events and persons associated with the building:

The Fire Department was first organized in 1879, and its first building, on Fifth Street, near its northeast corner with Elm Street, was erected.

In 1886 the Fire Department moved into new quarters in the newly erected village hall at the southeast corner of Sixth and Elm Streets. This building was designed by J.B. Sweatt of Marquette, Michigan. Based on surviving photographs, the company moved from a single to a double engine bay layout. This probably means that they had acquired additional engine(s).

By 1898 the need was felt that there should be a larger and separate firehouse. Although members were paid by the village their own affairs seem always to have been conducted somewhat along the lines of a fraternal organization. The dapper uniforms worn in the surviving photographs, as well as the continuous existence of the Smoke Eaters Den, now in the Village Hall, attest to the status of the members.

When the Fire Station was completed the Copper Country Evening News praised this “most artistic fire hall,” claiming that “Detroit cannot boast of such a hall.” Actually, handsome fire halls were relatively common for communities to erect.

The fire chiefs (also called foremen) of the company, with their tenure, are listed below:

1879-80	Frank Ward
1881 (Jan.-June)	Peter Ruppe
1881-83	William Monroe
1884-86 (Nov.)	Frank Ward
1886-97	William Monroe
1898-1902	Charles Schenk
1903-16	Joseph Trudell
1917-55	Jacob Kaiser
1955	John Picchiotino
1956-present	Bernard Shute

It was a popular children’s activity to slide down the fire pole.

The dances often held by the firemen for themselves were also attended by a relatively few specially invited guests. Such an invitation indicated that the guest was especially esteemed by the members of the company.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural merit and interest: Designed in 1897 by Charles K. Shand as the Village’s Fire Station, this red sandstone building is a handsome and rugged demonstration of the later influence of the Richardsonian Romanesque. Large, round arched fire engine bays, a solid composition and well-resolved roofline, highlighted by a corner bell tower, make this one of Shand’s best efforts in the

Calumet area. The interior plan, accommodating engines, horses, and men, is effective. The interior details, especially in the reading room, are excellent.

2. Condition of fabric: Good to excellent.

## B. Description of Exterior

1. Dimensions: 54' x 83'6". Rectangular in plan, the structure is two stories in height and its façade is visually divided into five bays.

2. Foundations: Red Sandstone.

3. Wall construction, finish, and color:

East and south walls: These are built of clear red sandstone. With the exception of some smooth cut details, the stone is rock faced. On the first story is coursed, with stones of even width. On the second story the stone is also coursed, but the courses alternate between wide and thin courses. Above the second story windows the stone coursing is random.

North and west walls: These are variegated red and white sandstone. The rock-faced stone is laid in a random rubble pattern.

4. Structural system, framing: The exterior walls are load bearing. In the basement there are brick and concrete piers and metal columns carrying metal I beam and wood beam floor joists. The roof is carried by wood trusses reinforced with metal turnbuckles and rods.

5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: There is a covered, frame ramp from grade up to the central bay of the west wall. This would have been the rear entrance for the horses.

6. Chimneys: There are four interior chimneys, all made of brick. One is on the west wall, near the peak of the gable. Two are along the south wall, and the last is on the north wall. All are enclosed within the thickness of the walls.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors:

East Wall (main facade): On the first floor, there are five doors, arranged symmetrically. The two outside doors are man doors. They are flood, four paneled, with round headed, clear glass transoms over. The sill of the southern door is made of concrete, while that on the north end is of red sandstone. The frames are rock faced clear red sandstone, with a red arch and drip cap over. The intrados and inside of the frame are smooth cut.

In the center there are three engine doorways. The doors are made of wood, with nine wood panels below and six glass panes above. They are made by McKee Overdoor of Aurora, Illinois. On the frames there are smooth cut bollards at grade to either side of the openings. The rest of the frames are round arched, rock faced clear red sandstone, with the inner faces of the stones smooth cut. There are drip caps over the voussoirs of the arches.

South and north walls: There are no doors.

West wall (facing Birch Lane): First floor, central bay: There is a double wood door, with two panels per door. The sill is wood while the sides are variegated red sandstone. There is a two light transom over the door, and a low clear red sandstone arch over the transom.

Second floor, central bay: This doorway, for hay, has been closed up. The sill, sides and low arch over are as on the door just below it in the central bay of the first floor.

b. Windows and shutters: There are no shutters.

East (facing 6<sup>th</sup> Street) Wall: On the second floor, there are six identical round headed windows, double hung, with one pane per sash. The sides are the uninterrupted red sandstone walls, smooth dressed on the insides. The sills are a smooth dressed, continuous stringcourse, with corbels (brackets) below on the outside two bays and under the double center bay. The tops are round-headed arches with drip days over.

South Wall:

Basement: There are two windows, at grade. Each is a two light fixed window. The sills and sides are the variegated red sandstone of the foundations, the lintel is the first course of the clear red sandstone used on the wall surface above.

First floor: There are six identical round headed windows with one or two lights per sash, double hung. The sills are clear red sandstone, smooth dressed. The window nearest the southeast corner has a smooth drip cap over the rock-faced arch. The other five windows do not have drip caps. Next to the westernmost window on this floor is a window of similar form, but shorter. Its arch is on the same level as the other windows, but its sill comes about midway on the other windows. This window is double hung, has two lights per sash and a smooth, clear red sandstone sill. The sides and tops of all these windows are as described above, for the east wall.

Near the east end of this wall is a window, which gives light to the cellar staircase. It is rectangular, double hung, has two lights per sash. The sill is smooth dressed, while the top and sides are the same as the wall surface.

Second Floor: There are eight windows, each with round heads of rock faced red sandstone with a smooth and continuous drip cap over. This is a continuation of the drip cap of the east wall, as is the stringcourse and sill, also of smooth, clear red sandstone. One of the windows is only half the height as on the floor below. All are double hung and have one or two lights per sash. Two windows have decorative colored glass around the edges of the sashes. These light the vestibule at the top of the stairs.

West wall: There are six windows on each floor, three on each side of the center doors. The sides are variegated red sandstone, and the sills and lintels are smooth dressed clear red sandstone. On the first floor all windows have been replaced by cinder and glass block panels. On the second floor, north of the center bay, wood panels have been placed in the openings. In the south three bays are double hung windows with two lights per sash.

North wall: There are no windows on the first floor.

On the second floor are six identical round-headed windows, double hung, with two panes per sash. The sills are clear red sandstone. The sides are rock-faced, variegated sandstone. The arches over the window are either clear or very slightly, variegated red sandstone.

8. Roof: The roofline on the east, main façade is composed of three elements that stick up above the actual roof, in a false-front manner. At the left corner is the bell tower. At the right side is a small, triangular pediment and in the middle is a larger triangular pediment. Centered on this pediment is the inscription, "Fire Station 1898." The face of these pediments is made of clear red sandstone, while the backsides are made of the variegated stone. The roof itself is a longitudinal, low gable covered with black tar paper and sealer.

a. Cornice, eaves: There are none. The walls simply terminate with a dressed sandstone coping at the top.

b. Dormers, cupolas, towers: There is a square bell tower of clear red sandstone at the southeast corner. This one story tower has a four-sided slate roofed spire over. The detail in the sandstone is well done. Note there is no hose-drying tower as the hoses were dried on a slightly pitched rack along the north wall of the engine room.

### C. Description of Interior:

#### 1. Floor plans:

Basement: There is a large room under the engine room, taking up the eastern two-thirds of the basement. In the west third of the basement the south third of that space is the furnace room, and the north two-thirds of that area is used for storage.

First floor: This is a large open space with wooden piers and a part partition wall about two-thirds of the way back from the east wall. This originally marked the wall between the engine room and the horse stalls.

Second floor: There is a vestibule at the top of the southeast stairs. One passes through sliding double doors into a long and relatively narrow room, with the long axis running east to west. Beyond this is another room, as long, but slightly more narrow. In the southeast corner of the floor is a small "Reading Room." At the southwest corner of the floor is a kitchen, and a storage room is to the north of this room (fig. 2).

2. Stairways: There are two staircases connecting the basement and the first floor. One is in the southeast corner of the building, and the other is in the northwest corner. Both are of simple wood construction. Moreover, there are two staircases from the first to the second floor, both made of wood, which has been painted. The one in the northwest corner is very simple. That in the southeast corner has wainscoting and turned balusters. Finally, there is only one narrow stairway, made of wood, connecting the second floor with the attic crawl space and the roof. This, too, is the only access to the tower. The stair is located along the east wall of the storage room at the back of the second floor.



3. Flooring: The flooring for the basement and first floor is concrete. The second floor has hardwood (2 ½") floors, with 4" pine in the storage area and kitchen. The pine floor has been covered with linoleum in the kitchen, however.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Although the basement is unfinished, the upper floors have painted plaster walls. The first floor ceiling consists of heavy, probably 8" by 8" chamfered wood beams that form coffers with diagonal board and bead. The front portion of the of second floor has dark-stained, paneled wainscoting and picture rails. The walls above the wainscoting and the ceiling is made of ¾" plaster, which has been painted.

5. Openings

a. Doorways and doors: On the first floor, there are two simple wood doors to the basement stairs. Similar doors are found on the second floor in the rear third of the floor plan. The other doors on this floor are made of wood, have five panels, and are stained a dark color. The doorframes are simple. There are transoms over two of the doors in the vestibule at the top of the stairs. There are three sets of sliding doors off the center long room. They are heavily paneled and in excellent condition.

6. Decorative features and trim: There is a handsome fireplace in the reading room. The opening and hearth are of glazed red and white brick. There is a beveled mirror in the center of the distinctive wood mantle piece. At the rear of the smaller of the long rooms on the second floor, there are paneled wood lockers, probably intended for use by the firemen.

7. Notable hardware: None.

8. Mechanical equipment: On the first floor the hose drying racks are still in place. The brass fireman's pole has been removed.

D. Site and surroundings:

The building is located on the west side of a north-south street. Thus its main facade is the east wall of the building. To the north is a parking lot, to the west is Birch Lane (a between blocks alley), on the south is a narrow yard, with frame residence at the rear. Several other distinctive buildings are in the block, at least two of which are known to be by Shand. Two others may be attributed to Shand.

a. Historic landscape design: The building is well scaled to its block and the design of the south and east walls presents a satisfying composition to the street.

b. Outbuildings: None.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Primary and unpublished sources:

Interviews 8/12/1975 with William Kaiser (brother of Jacob Kaiser, long time fire chief) and Ida Blue, both of Calumet.

Drawings and other documents are in the village Clerk's office or vault.

The deed is recorded at the Houghton County Court House, Houghton, Michigan.  
An extensive collection of photographs is available at Coppertown, USA, 101 Red Jacket Road,  
Calumet, Michigan.

B. Secondary and published sources:

Calumet Township Centennial 1866-1966 Souvenir Program  
Village of Calumet Michigan 1875-1975 Souvenir Centennial Book

(both these books are available either through the Village or Township offices, or from Coppertown, USA, all in Calumet, Michigan)

C. Drawings of the Red Jacket Fire Station (1898) in the Calmest Village Clerk's Vault:

1. Village of Calumet / Fire Station / Front Elevation / G.H.M. 3-31-59.
2. Village of Calumet / Owner/ Basement Plan / C.K. Shand / Architect  
(no date, this is a tracing, on linen, not earlier than 7-3-58)
3. Calumet Village Fire Hall / General Arrangement of / New Reinforced Concrete Floor / Calumet, Mich  
Dec 15, 1939 / Drawn by Harlow Stannard / Approved by S.A. Nagel / Reg Eng'r
4. A series of sheets for the Red Jacket Fire Station:
  - a. (cover sheet) Plans and Specifications / Red Jacket Fire Station
  - b. Specification, on legal sized onion skin carbons
    - (1) General Conditions ... / C.K. Shand / Architect and Superintendent / Borgo Block, Calumet,  
Mich (paged 1-4)
    - (2) Specifications/ of / Stone Work... (paged 1-6)
    - (3) Specifications of Carpenter Work ... (paged 1-10)
  - c. Drawings
    - (1) Village of Red Jacket      Front Elevation      C.K. Shand  
owner                          scale 1/4"                          architect

“The within Plans and annexed specifications are the Plans and Specifications mentioned in the contracts and bonds executed on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of Aug 1898./ G. Prociissi & Co./ Bajari and Ulseth”  
(The drawing includes the legend in the center gable: 1898 (/) Fire Station )

- (2) Village of Red Jacket      Rear Elevation      C.K. Shand

owner	scale $\frac{1}{4}$	architect
(3) Village of Red Jacket owner	Side Elevation scale $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1'	C.K. Shand architect
(4) Village of Red Jacket owner	Plan of First Floor scale $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1'	C.K. Shand architect
(5) Village of Red Jacket owner	Second Floor Plan scale $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1'	C.K. Shand architect
(6) Village of Red Jacket owner	Basement Plan scale $\frac{1}{4}$ "	C.K. Shand architect
(7) Village of Red Jacket owner	Transverse Section scale $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1'	C.K. Shand architect
(8) Village of Red Jacket owner	Longitudinal Section scale $\frac{1}{4}$ "	C.K. Shand architect

Note: These drawings measure about 18" x 30", except #8, which is about 24" x 30".

D. Sources not yet investigated:

Further interviews with persons such as William Kaiser or Ida Blum should be productive, as well as with the present Fire Chief Bernard Shute. If a collection of Fire Company memorabilia exists, Shute would probably know where to find it.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation was done in the summer of 1975 by Kevin Harrington and Wendy Nicholas for the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), a division of the National Park Service.

Fig. 1 Perspective view of the Fire Station. Photo by author, ca. 1975.

Fig. 2 Interior floor plan. Sketch by author, ca. 1975.